

#### 4.132 Conservation of the River Ebro

RECALLING that, with a length of 908 km, a drainage basin area of 83,093 km<sup>2</sup>, and a flow rate greater than 600 m<sup>3</sup>/s near its mouth, the River Ebro is one of the most important rivers in Spain;

BEARING IN MIND that, due to the alluvial deposits of the River Ebro that have been accumulating since ancient times, a delta has formed in the mouth of the river, and that this delta has unique features as far as its geography and geology are concerned;

OBSERVING that the Ebro Delta is one of the key areas used by many bird species during their migrations from central and northern Europe to southern Spain and Africa;

ALSO OBSERVING that the high biodiversity of the entire basin, as well as the river mouth, makes the River Ebro one of the areas of greatest environmental interest in the Iberian Peninsula;

RECOGNIZING that the Ebro Delta is currently retreating, as far as its surface area is concerned, due to water abstraction from the river for human consumption and crop irrigation, and, above all, due to the reduction in the quantity of sediment transported by the river because of reservoir construction in the Ebro basin;

AWARE that the intense human activity carried out in the Ebro basin and neighbouring territories puts increasing pressure on the river and its delta, and is becoming a threat to the maintenance of the area's essential ecological conditions;

BEARING IN MIND that the area dealt with here is a quintessential example requiring the coordinated work of all stakeholders involved in the application of the wise use concept, established by the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands 37 years ago; and

OBSERVING that the wise use concept is based on the collaboration, exchange of information and the full participation of all the sectors involved: administrative and management organizations, research institutions, NGOs and local community organizations;

#### **The World Conservation Congress at its 4th Session in Barcelona, Spain, 5-14 October 2008:**

1. REQUESTS:
  - (a) government agencies in Spain to give the highest priority to the implementation of conservation and wise use measures related to the maintenance of the essential ecological conditions and processes in the Ebro River Basin; and
  - (b) IUCN's members to recognize and support the Ebro River Basin organizations' initiatives to promote the conservation and sustainable development of the region;
2. URGES Spanish and European administrations to avoid promoting measures (such as water transfers, abstraction and dams) that may have a negative impact on rivers, their flow and their ecological conditions;
3. ENCOURAGES all IUCN members to support the Spanish administrations in this task; and
4. REQUESTS all international organizations, including the multilateral bodies that finance development projects, to support the Spanish administrations in the implementation of policies to protect and conserve the River Ebro.

State and agency members of the United States refrained from engaging in deliberations on this motion and took no national government position on the motion as adopted for reasons given in the U.S. General Statement on the IUCN Motions Process.